(Washington, DC) Congressman Alcee L. Hastings (D-Miramar) applauded the House of Representatives on joining the Senate in passing the *Claims Settlement Act of 2010* (H.R. 4783) on November 30, 2010. The bill contains funding to implement the settlements of the *Pigford II* class action lawsuit involving past racial discrimination against African-American farmers by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the *Cobell v. Salazar* class action lawsuit involving the mismanagement of trust funds for Native Americans by the U.S. Department of the Interior. The funding to implement the *Pigford* settlement is estimated to be $1.15 billion and to implement the *Cobell* settlement $3.41 billion.

"African-American farmers and Native American trust holders are long overdue for the injustices they have endured," said Hastings. "The passage of the *Claims Settlement Act* brings much-needed closure for these disenfranchised communities.

"Justice has finally been delivered to these farmers by compensating them for past failures of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of the Interior. I commend the House of Representatives and the Senate for finally closing the door on a dishonorable chapter of our Nation's history and rectifying past discriminatory treatment through justice and fair dealing."

As a lawyer and former judge, Hastings has been at the forefront of many of the most important judiciary issues facing the country and remains committed to fighting against injustice and racial discrimination.

"While the passage of the *Claims Settlement Act* serves as a fervent display of our nation's progress, we must continue to remedy past injustices by working tirelessly to resolve claims of past discrimination, including those made by women and Hispanic farmers in a expeditious and just manner."

Congressman Alcee L. Hastings is Vice Chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, a senior member of the House Rules Committee, and Co-Chairman of the U.S. Helsinki Commission.

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